

# WHO'S WHO AT REC AND PARKS

*This year brings some significant staff changes at Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks.*

## DEPARTING STAFF

The late **Benjamin (Ben) Washington** had a very distinguished career with Rec and Parks. For 31 years, his dedication and commitment impacted the lives of youth from across the city. At Robert C. Marshall, Joseph Briscoe, McCullough Homes, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, Lexington Terrace, Easterwood, Liberty, Cahill, Upton Multi-Purpose, Greater Model, Towanda and most recently, Harlem Park recreation centers, Ben went the extra mile to provide exceptional activities. He was known for his exuberant approach to recreational programming. Ben was also known as a legend in the Bureau of Recreation where introduced the National Sports Coaches Association, a coaches certification program.

Benjamin (Ben) Washington is survived by his wife Barbara, mother Dorothy, daughter Bernice, son Vincent, sister Minyon Bailey; and grandchildren Jasmine, Maya, Judah Harrison and Bradley Brandon.

**Phyllis Berger**, a longtime pillar of recreation in Baltimore, has been with the Department for 40 years. Her career started in 1965 when she worked as a part-time Summer Corp Worker. By the 90s, Phyllis had worked her way up to Center Director II. As Leisure Service Center Coordinator for the Northern District, Phyllis was instrumental in providing the citizens of Baltimore with excellent recreational programming. Phyllis retired in October to spend more time with her family.

Rec and Parks bade farewell to **Roslyn Johnson** in August, who served as the Department's Associate Director for the past 3 years. Roslyn accepted a position at the D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks.

The Department deeply appreciates the work of all these individuals. We wish them well in their new endeavors.

## PROMOTIONS

**Portia Harris**, who had been the Division Chief of Youth and Adults Sports since 2004, has become the Acting Associate Director. She has served the Department since 1980.

**Thomas Jeannetta**, the former Park District Manager, joined the Department in 1978. Currently, he heads the Bureau of Parks as Acting Chief of Parks.

**Robert Dallas** will take on additional responsibilities as the Acting Deputy Chief of Parks. He joined the Department in 1971 as Crew Leader. Later, he became the first African American Foreman for the Bureau of Recreation and Parks.

**Robert (Bob) Wall**, who joined the Department in 1971 as a volunteer and most recently served as a Recreation Programmer, has become the Acting Division Chief of the Youth and Adults Sports.

**Dennis Spencer** will take on additional responsibilities as the Acting Leisure Service Center Coordinator for the Northern District.

**Jackie Payne-el**, Motor Vehicle Driver I, has been with the Department for 11 years. He has also worked at Clifton Park and Cylburn Arboretum.

Join us in congratulating these individuals.

## NEW STAFF

**Rebecca Feldberg** joins the Department as the City Arborist for the Forestry Division. Rebecca is a certified Arborist who graduated from the University of Maryland with a B.S. in Horticulture. She comes to us from the Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources in Arlington, Va. where she worked as the Natural Resources Program Coordinator for nine years.

**Nia Imani Grant** joins the Department as a Special Assistant to the Division Chief of the Leisure Services. She graduated from Morgan State University with a B.S. in Business Administration. Currently, she is working on a Masters degree in Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware.

**Edward Jones** joined the Gwynns Falls Division in July as a Small Engine Mechanic II.

Please join us in welcoming our new staff members.

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## City of Baltimore Recreation & Parks



## Baltimore's Leisurely Times

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# Baltimore's Leisurely Times

FALL/WINTER 2005-2006

## Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks

*Baltimore's Leisurely Times* is a Rec and Parks produced semi-annual newsletter dedicated to informing the citizens of Baltimore on "What's happening" at Rec and Parks. It provides detailed coverage on our activities, programs, and events for the upcoming season.



## SPECIAL FACILITY FEATURE *Fall into autumn with Cylburn Arboretum*

Baltimore may be known all across the nation for its exciting summers, but those who have been here in the fall know that it's the sea-

son when Baltimore really shows its true colors. At Cylburn Arboretum, trees glimmer in a kaleidoscope of color and brilliant foliage decorates the grounds. It is also surrounded by the sight, sounds and brisk air of the fall season.

Cylburn is the home to a host of fall/winter activities and special events for the entire family. Monthly activities include afternoon teas, horticultural lectures, workshops and open houses. Cylburn is also the perfect destination for a day trip.

### A Rich History

In the 1860s, George Frederick, architect of City Hall, designed Cylburn Mansion. Constructed of gneiss from the local Bare Hills quarry, the mansion is a Renaissance Revival style home with Italian influences.

Cylburn was once the summer home for

Baltimore's chromium magnate, Jesse Tyson. In his 60s, he married 19-year-old Edith Johns of the Johns Hopkins family. The couple lived and entertained at Cylburn until Jesse's death in 1906. After, Edith spent most of her time decorating, redecorating, and gardening at the mansion.

In 1910, Edith married Army lieutenant Bruce Cotton. After Edith's death in 1942, the 176-acre estate was sold to the city of Baltimore for \$42,000 with the intentions of becoming a public park. Instead, Cylburn Mansion became a home for neglected children. In 1958, the property was declared "Cylburn Park, a wildflower preserve."

Shortly thereafter, the Horticultural Division moved in and built six large glass greenhouses. Mr. Gerard Moudry, who was named the first Chief Horticulturist, began planting unique trees

on the property.

However, Edith's influence is still strongly felt today. Custom-designed tapestries line the hallway walls and beautiful plasterwork in the parlor reflects her fine taste in decorating.

### Picturesque Views

Cylburn Arboretum and Mansion is also home to strikingly impressive public gardens and a nature preserve encompassing over 200 acres. It has more than 3 miles of nature trails through a mature piedmont forest and a man-made wetland area. Cylburn also features a variety of large specimen trees and seasonal gardens including: formal, shade, backyard and display gardens.

Presiding over the Formal Garden are two large statues of Lady Baltimore that once graced the St. Paul Street Bridge. These imposing ladies have reigned over many weddings that have taken place in the garden. Nearby, the recently renovated All-America Selections Garden highlights the best new annuals available for homeowners. A Woodland Garden with a gazebo is a beautiful resting place to view the nearby Botanist's and Habitat gardens.

### Visiting Cylburn

The gardens and grounds are open year round at Cylburn Arboretum from 6 a.m. to dusk. There is no charge for visitors. The Cylburn Mansion is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. excluding holidays. For more information, please visit [www.cylburnassociation.org](http://www.cylburnassociation.org) or call (410) 396-0180.

*Stay tuned for the next issue of  
Baltimore's Leisurely Times for the special  
facility feature on the Howard Peters Rawlings  
Conservatory and Botanic Gardens of  
Baltimore!*

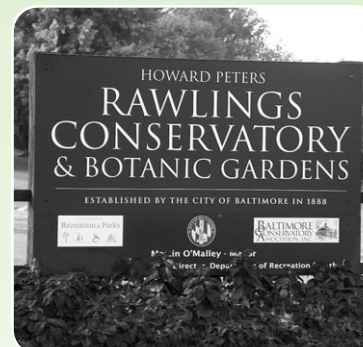


**PICK UP YOUR COPY  
OF THE 2005-2006 FALL/WINTER  
PROGRAM GUIDE TODAY!**

The 2005-2006 Fall/Winter Program Guide is available online as well as at various locations throughout the city. For more information, please call (410) 396-7900 or visit our website at: <http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/recnparks/home.htm>

## DID YOU KNOW THAT:

The Baltimore Conservatory, Cylburn Arboretum's sister facility, has a new name. The Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens of Baltimore was named after the late Delegate Howard P. Rawlings. A longtime supporter, Delegate Rawlings was instrumental in securing funds for the conservatory's renovation project. Thus, to honor his dedication and commitment to the Conservatory and Baltimore, Council President Sheila Dixon and the Baltimore City Council unanimously passed council bill #04, 1524, which renamed the Baltimore Conservatory to the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens of Baltimore.



# TO THE CITIZENS OF BALTIMORE

*Get up, get out and have fun!*

According to the Surgeon General, many people in the U.S live inactive lives. In fact, 40 percent of adults do not participate in any leisure-time physical activity. Over 40 percent of our children spend more than two hours a day watching television or playing video games. It is widely known that inactivity leads to obesity, which is associated with heart disease, cancer and diabetes. There are a lot of publications—and, yes, newsletters like this one—that are dedicated to telling you the “right” way to be physically active or to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Of course, the definition of “right” varies from publication to publication. What’s right for one person is not always right for another, so you have to get a sense of what activities are tailored to fit your individual needs.

That’s why I’m so proud to introduce the first issue of the Rec and Parks' newsletter, *Baltimore's Leisurely Times*. Our goal is to provide the citizens of Baltimore with detailed information on our activities, programs, and events to help you maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. In this issue, you will find a special facility feature on Cylburn Arboretum. One of our 11 special facilities, Cylburn is the perfect venue for those who are interested in getting the blood pumping by taking a leisurely walk. You will also find the Office of Partnerships' column, which highlights the accomplishments and special events of our partners.

In the "Most Dedicated Volunteer or Staff" section, we will honor one person from Recreation and one from Parks in each edition of the newsletter. These are people who are out there, everyday, promoting healthy lifestyles.

So dig into this issue and find a host of ways to incorporate more activity into your daily life. Remember to select activities that you **enjoy**. And don’t worry about finding something to do, Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks has something for everyone.

Just continue to BELIEVE in a green, fun and fit Baltimore!

*Connie A. Brown*

Connie A. Brown  
Acting Director

**FALL OPEN HOUSE**  
at the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory  
and Botanic Garden of Baltimore  
**NOV. 13, 2005 •2-4 P.M.**  
Come and check out our wonderful Chrysanthemum  
and year-round displays!  
For more information, please call (410) 396-0008.

## PARTNERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*Make a difference...  
save our city’s parks by  
becoming a partner today!*

City parks are local destinations for all of us to enjoy without pricey admission costs – and that’s why the department needs everyone’s help to improve and preserve them for future generations.

How can you get involved? Well, the answer may lie in us all. Ask yourself these questions: What does the park mean to me or my neighborhood? Why is it important to keep it clean and beautiful? How can I make my park more vibrant and safer for my community?

The Department of Recreation and Parks is looking to enter into public and private partnerships with various organizations that are interested in helping to restore, improve or preserve our city’s park properties. It’s through these distinctive partnerships that the city has made some significant improvements. The newly established Office of Partnerships was created as a collaborative effort between the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Parks and People Foundation to increase community involvement and to persuade groups to

become active stewards.

The department has formed over 30 different partners so far to conduct diverse types of park related projects. As a result, the city has saved nearly \$400,000 this year alone. Many of our partners have spent countless hours assisting the department with minor and routine maintenance tasks

such as weekly trash removal, planting trees, organizing park clean-ups, special events and athletic programs.

For example, our partners have raised thousands of dollars to build a brand new children’s playground in Mt. Vernon. Another neighborhood association in South Baltimore raised money to build a new bocce court. So far, our partners have contributed over 30,000 volunteer hours and over \$800,000 towards park improvements.

Is the program necessary? Absolutely. The program is needed because like many municipalities around the country, Baltimore has limited resources and funding to maintain the numerous park properties across the city. This has forced the city to come up with creative solutions to continue serving its constituents.

The benefits of the program are priceless and vary from one neighborhood to another. But the outcome is the same for most communities because no one likes the idea of living

near a dark or dirty park bordered by illegal activity.

Nice parks have neighborhoods named after them. Popular parks have contributed to the booming real estate market. Vibrant parks bring commerce: new commercial and residential developments, restaurants and more jobs. Thus, great parks contribute in part to a city’s economic and social development.

The Partnerships for Parks program, a joint program with the Parks and People Foundation, is an exceptional program that has enabled the department to fund numerous park projects. Through this partnership, the department has awarded community grants in the amount of \$50,000 to over 30 city community groups who have submitted grant applications and proposals to initiate and conduct various park projects.

We know that this program works. That’s why in each issue of Baltimore’s Leisurely Times, BCRP’s Office of Partnerships will dedicate this column to highlighting the results and special events of our partners. Appropriately named “Partners in the Spotlight,” this column will feature all of the beautification or renovation projects that were accomplished through a partnership with BCRP.

For more information about our Partnership program and how your organization can participate, please call (410) 396-7020.

A special thanks to all of our official partners for their tireless efforts and generous contributions.



Photo by: Donna Stupski

## REC AND PARKS “SHAPE UP” FOR SENIOR HEALTH & FITNESS DAY

Last month, Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks and the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education hosted the fourth annual Senior Health and Fitness Day at Reisterstown Road Plaza. Senior Health and Fitness Day featured an indoor senior walk, low-impact aerobics, health screenings as well as information from various health care providers. As part of Baltimore’s Health Inoculation Program, flu shots for seniors were also available.

"We were pleased to have joined forces with the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education to celebrate those who are living longer, healthier and more fruitful lives," says Connie A. Brown, Acting Director of Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks. "Rec and Parks wants to get the word out to all of Baltimore’s seniors that there are an enormous amount of benefits associated with an active exercise regimen and lifestyle."

Among the benefits of fitness is increased cardio-respiratory endurance, as well as stronger muscles, which help reduce the risk of falling and improve the ability to perform routine tasks. Moderate physical activity can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and colon cancer. Exercise also

helps seniors’ lifestyle according to a recent study published in the American Heart Association’s journal Circulation. Exercise can’t hold off the effects of aging, but it can improve an elderly person’s chances of maintaining an independent lifestyle, researchers said. Most importantly, seniors can continue to be self-sufficient during their golden years.

"Our goals for Senior Day were to make exercise fun and to encourage all seniors to take advantage of the many health and fitness programs offered at Rec and Parks," said JoAnn Cason, Recreation Program Coordinator.

To help seniors stay motivated throughout the year, Rec and Parks’ Senior Citizens Division hosts a wide variety of citywide programs and activities to keep seniors young and fit. Senior Day at Camden Yards, the Wisdom Walking Program and the Baltimore City “50 Plus” Metro Games are just a few of the wonderful activities offered to adults aged 50 and over. There are also “50 Plus” Sports Club events such as bowling, softball and swimming.

For more information on the 50 Plus Sports Club and other senior activities or to locate a Golden Age Club closest to your home, please contact the Senior Citizens Division at (410) 396-2920.

## ”WHAT’S HAPPENING“ AT REC AND PARKS

**Art Program: a lesson in “GREEN”**

Tench Tilghman Recreation Center's art program provides more than just art for the children when the center director Jeannette Sykes introduces her unique entrepreneurial concept. The Kuumba Nia Entrepreneurship Art Program, jointly sponsored by Tench Tilghman and the Backcourt Foundation, teaches children how to handle the profits earned from selling their artwork as well as how to become the boss of a profit making business. In its sixth year, the program is also a part of the Reading program.

"The children enrolled in this program all learn to respect the American Dollar," said Jeannette Sykes. "They also learn how hard it is to make money through a reputable business endeavor."

Last summer, 29 children participated in the program and the results were overwhelming. They were able to create T-shirts and frame their artwork. During the winter, the children will have an opportunity to earn money by selling their work.

"Parents really appreciate the program because the children learn the benefits of hard work," said Sykes. "They also learn what it's like to earn an honest paycheck."

The art program is open to children ages 7 to 12 but they must be enrolled in one of the After-school Programs sponsored by BCRP's recreation centers. Registration is ongoing. For more information on the Kuumba Nia Entrepreneurship Art

Program, please contact Jeannette Sykes at (410) 396-9229.

**Open Play at the William J. Myers Soccer Pavilion**

Anyone 14 and older can come in and play soccer from 4-6 p.m. Teams are formed and participants can play and have fun while playing in a not-so-competitive league. Admission is \$5. For more information, please call (410) 396-5782.

**Unlimited Basketball**

Basketball Leagues are now forming at various sites for the upcoming fall/winter season. For more information, please call (410) 396-0848.

**Dominic "Mimi" DiPietro Ice Rink**

Dominic "Mimi" DiPietro Ice Rink opens for the fall/winter season from October 2005 through April 2006. For information, please call (410) 396-9392.

**Make a difference: Volunteer at Rec and Parks!**

We know that you have what it takes. So, let us see that inner beauty shine by becoming a Volunteer. We need volunteers for several Rec and Parks' programs, activities and special events.

The following are just a few ways that you can volunteer:

**The Therapeutic Division could use a few good men, women and teens for:**

**Saturday Morning Club**

Student and adult volunteers are needed for the monthly Saturday Morning Club for Kids with Disabilities. Volunteer duties include assisting with arts and crafts, games and sports activities. Program hours are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Variety Children's Theatre Project**

The Therapeutic Division is looking for student and adult volunteers who love kids and the theater. The Variety Children's Theatre Project is an "inclusion" theatre program for children with and without disabilities that meets three Saturday mornings each month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The program begins Oct. 1, 2005 and continues through the school year.

**Saturday Night Social Club**

The Therapeutic Division is looking for student and adult volunteers who "really like to have fun" for our monthly Saturday Night Social Club dances for adults with developmental disabilities. The monthly program offers music, dancing, contests and socializing. Volunteers are needed to interact with the club members, assist with distributing refreshments, helping with contests and "boogying down" with the participants during the evening activities.

**For more information on how you can volunteer with the Therapeutic Division, please call (410) 396-7072.**

## REC AND PARKS’ MOST DEDICATED STAFF/ VOLUNTEER

*A lifetime of care brings green rewards*

It’s no coincidence that Ms. Betty Stran, a retired nurse from John Hopkins and Greater Baltimore hospitals, decided to spend her golden years caring for plants. At her home of 48 years, she has maintained a greenhouse filled with an assortment of ferns, cactus and orchids plants. For the last 14 years, Ms. Stran has been lending her “green thumb” to the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and Botanic Gardens of Baltimore and the Cylburn Arboretum.



On Wednesdays, she spends a few hours cutting, transplanting and watering as well as nurturing the “green” life at the Conservatory. On Thursdays, Ms. Stran provides a little TLC to the corn, beets, radish and onions in the Demonstration Garden at the Cylburn Arboretum. She also volunteers for the facilities’ special events such as Cylburn’s Market Day and the Conservatory’s Afternoon in the Garden. Ms. Stran has even convinced one of her close friends to volunteer with her at the Conservatory.

"Betty has cared for thousands of plants, answered thousands of questions from visitors and given thousands of hours of her time," said Conservatory Supervisor Kate Bloom. "People

like Betty are one in a million and she comes to us out of the goodness of her heart."

"Betty is so sweet and always so dependable," said Cylburn Greenhouse Supervisor Melissa Grim.

**Forever Summer**

In 1976, Susan McCardell thought she was only going to work for the city of Baltimore for one summer. She didn't realize that she was changing the course of her life. That summer, Sue worked with the Mobile program at Memorial Plaza. She traveled across the city on the Fun Wagon to areas that didn't have recreation centers. In the years since, Sue has served three mayors and gained a lot of very special friends. In some ways, her summer job of more than 20 years ago continues today.

Some may call it a coincidence, while others may call it fate that today Sue is the Center Director for South Baltimore Recreation Center. Growing up in a household of 10 children may have prepared her for a career working with children, but nothing could have prepared her for such a rewarding life. Over the past 20 years, she has gotten help from co-workers because Sue says that they all have a wealth of information and resources to share. The Department has also sent Sue to several workshops and training.

Earlier this year, Sue went to Philadelphia for an after-school training program. There, she met people from all over the country including a group of Navajo Indians from Arizona. She hopes

to start a pen-pal program with the group and the 54 children currently enrolled in her after-school program.



The after-school program, in many ways, provides an opportunity for Sue to establish a relationship with the kids. Many of them started coming to the center at five and return year after year with the same bright smiles, says Sue. Several high school freshmen as well as three kids from Towson, Coppin and Morgan are among the former after-school programmers who stop by the center on a regular basis.

"Sue is one of the best people I know," said CeCelia Alexander, Leisure Service Center Coordinator for the Southern District. "She is dedicated to the youth of Baltimore and goes the extra mile to give them experiences they may not ordinarily receive."

"I have had the pleasure of knowing Sue on both a professional and personal level for almost 30 years," said Lynn Baker, Volunteer and Permits/Special Events Coordinator. "She is truly a dedicated, compassionate and caring individual. Over the years, she has given unselfishly of her time, talents and skills to the citizens of Baltimore."